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A Dangerous Friendship: Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists in the Battle for Israel

Jamin Christopher Carlisle
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Jamin Christopher Carlisle entitled "A Dangerous Friendship: Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists in the Battle for Israel." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Philosophy.

Gilya Schmidt, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Christine Shepardson, Charles Reynolds

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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A Dangerous Friendship:
Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists in the Battle for Israel

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Jamin Christopher Carlisle
August 2007

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Floyd Anderson Strange, who taught me that with unconditional love and support anything can be accomplished.

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Dr. Gilya G. Schmidt has been the ideal mentor and thesis advisor. Her knowledge, advice, and kind demeanor have made my academic career a truly enriching experience. I would also like to thank Dr. Charles Reynolds for his insightful criticisms. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Christine Shepardson for constantly pushing me to be the best scholar I could be.

Abstract

A Dangerous Friendship:

Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists in the Battle for Israel

By

Jamin Christopher Carlisle

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the relationship between Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists and the harm that can ultimately result from this relationship. The first chapter examines the history of Jewish religious Zionists and the ways that it attempts to influence the Israeli government. Special attention is paid to religious settlements founded in the West Bank as a tactic for expanding Israel's borders. The second chapter discusses Christian Zionists' use of biblical scripture to argue in favor of expanding Israel's borders to reflect those described in the Hebrew Bible. The third chapter examines Christian Zionist rhetoric vilifying Arab Muslims in an attempt to heighten the pre-existing tension between Arab Muslims and Jewish fundamentalists.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. Jewish Fundamentalists	5
III. Christian Zionists	23
IV. Christian Zionists and Jewish Fundamentalists Working Together	42
V. Conclusion	56
Bibliography	58
Vita	62

I. Introduction

Zionism comes in many forms. In its best-known construction, Zionism refers to the political organization that diligently worked toward the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The most notable highlight of early institutional Zionism was Theodor Herzl's sponsoring of the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and the Congress' subsequent founding of the World Zionist Organization. Herzl's objective was finally realized, long after his death, in May of 1948 when the modern state of Israel declared its independence. The Zionism promoted by the World Zionist Organization certainly had religious elements in its philosophy. However, the main motivation for the group's cause largely resulted from the members' desire to escape the various persecutions and pogroms of the European countries coupled with the concept of a homeland specifically for Jews, governed by Jews.

Although each modern incarnation of Zionism has a focus on Israel and its status as the Jewish homeland, different groups that identify as Zionists have different ideologies about the responsibilities that come with inhabiting Israel. This thesis will examine two types of Zionist groups that construct an image of Israel using religious frameworks. There will be two primary groups discussed in this essay. The first group examined will be religious Jews who insist upon a modern Israel governed by Jewish law, with borders that mirror those described in biblical accounts. The second group examined will be Christians who identify as Zionists. These Christian Zionists hope for a modern Israel similar to that of Jewish religious Zionists in that Christian Zionists call for an Israel populated by Jews and governed by Jewish Law. The Christian Zionists'

motivation lies strictly in their own theology. This paper will examine these two groups' common vision of modern Israel and how it leads them to look to each other for assistance in achieving this goal. However, because of the differences in Jewish and Christian theology, the alliance between the two groups can only lead to violence in Israel. Using both secular historical sources and rhetoric from each of the groups, this essay will argue that in accepting the assistance of Christian Zionists, Jewish fundamentalists place both Israeli citizens and the state of Israel's very existence in danger.

Given the original objective of the World Zionist Organization, the creation of a Jewish state, it would be natural to assume that the movement was no longer relevant following the official beginning of the modern state of Israel in 1948. However, even if the group may have been able to claim success in its mission following the Israeli declaration of independence, it was far from being fully finished and even continues to exist at present with a commitment to maintaining Israel as a Jewish state. Although the original Zionist movement was largely secular in its mission, it was not without individual devoutly religious Jews.¹ For these members, a Jewish homeland in Israel was more than a place where Jews could escape persecution. The pious contingent of the World Zionist Organization saw the return of Jews to Israel as a divine right. In the aftermath of 1967's Six-Day War, such a passionate ideology has at times resulted in violent consequences.

The religious Zionists' claims of divine right to greater Israel have motivated

¹ One group of Zionists with a primarily religious motivation was the Merkaz Ruchani, also known as Mizrahi. The groups' leader, Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, argued that "the revival of the Land of Israel was one of the most important commandments of the Torah, but emphasized that "Torah-true" Judaism was not

political action on their part.² However, support for religious Zionism extends beyond individuals' identification as Jewish. Particularly in the United States, the most vocal advocates for the restoration of greater Israel to the Jews are certain groups of Protestant Christians. Backed by a biblical interpretation of Genesis 15 that argues in favor of Palestine being entirely under Jewish control, Christian Zionists have launched various campaigns in support of this cause. The combined efforts of both these groups in attempting to expand modern Israel's borders have proven to be a catalyst for a great deal of conflict in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Additionally, the activism by both Christian Zionists and Jewish religious Zionists has shaped the image of Israel on a global scale with much media attention being given to violence inside Israel. While on the surface the two groups appear to have a shared desire to populate all of greater Israel with Jews, the underlying motivation of each group is quite different.

The objective of the first portion of this essay will be the presentation of a brief history of the Jewish religious Zionists.³ Although they do not comprise the majority of Israeli citizens, the impact of key individuals and groups associated with religious Zionism has influenced policy formation in Israel as well as the country's perception on a global scale. Understanding the history of the religious Zionist movement, with its use of violence and later rejection of violence, is essential to gaining a clear understanding of

less obligatory upon Zionist settlers if the Holy Land were once again to be the arena for Jewry's "spiritual" mission." Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel*. (New York: Knopf, 2002), 67.

² The boundaries of greater Israel include the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (Judea and Samaria), and parts of modern Syria.

³ The first section of this essay will deal particularly with the followers of Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, who was a strong advocate of the right to a 'Greater Israel', and their ideologies concerning the government of Israel along with their impact on the Israeli political arena. However, it should not be assumed that these particular Kook-inspired groups comprise the whole of devoutly religious Jews who opt for political activism in Israel. Other groups such as the Haredim also assert their political opinions in a public sphere. However, the Haredim focus their attention on public policies other than those that are related to the cause of religious Zionism and Israeli-Palestinian relations.

the harm that can result from a partnership with Zionist Christians. The second section of this paper will deal with the Christian Zionist movement. Attention will be given to the religious and political activism undertaken by these Christian groups on behalf of the religious Jewish Zionists for the intended result of promoting the Christian Zionist agenda. What motivation lies behind many Christian Zionists' support of a greater Israel? Should Jewish Fundamentalists reject this support? This paper will argue that the eschatology of the Christian supporters of religious Zionism is inherently harmful not only to the religious Zionists, but to the citizens of Israel as a whole, and ultimately to the Jewish people.

II. Jewish Fundamentalism

The first section of this thesis will discuss the religious Zionist movement. Its leaders will be discussed in order to gain a firm understanding of the theology that led to its beginning. Later, examples of religious Zionists' social and political activism will be provided in order to better understand the impact that religious Zionism has had on contemporary Israel. This section will demonstrate how the fervor sparked by religious Zionism has led to acts of violence that threaten the safety of Israelis.

In contemporary Western culture, the term fundamentalism comes loaded with presuppositions. With the term closely tied to Protestant Christianity at its inception and now closely linked to Islamic extremism, the connotations associated with the 'fundamentalism' label are almost always negative. The notion of literal scriptural interpretation lies at the heart of the popular understanding of what it means to be a fundamentalist. Yet even in the most Orthodox of Jewish groups, the acceptance of the Talmud as a religious authority stands as evidence against a wholly literal reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. With that said, the majority of resources available on the topic of religious Zionism choose the term 'fundamentalist' to describe the group.⁴ Because the objective of this paper is not to argue whether or not a type of Judaism can conform to the common understanding of fundamentalism, I will also use the term fundamentalism as a descriptor of religious Zionism when referring to the aforementioned source materials.

Religious Jews have certainly always had a place in modern Israeli society. While

⁴ Liebman argues in favor of a new definition of fundamentalism that is more applicable to the religious Zionists. "Fundamentalists conceive of their religion as: 1) totalistic, it is related to all aspects of life, 2) exclusivistic, it rejects all claims to ultimate truth other than its own, and 3) precise or certain; the adherent is able to fully understand the truths which the religion affirms in the sense that he/she knows what God wants" Charles S. Liebman, *Religion, Democracy, and Israeli Society* (Langhorne, Pa.: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997) 61.

their governmental participation varies, there are many religiously observant Jews who assign no taboo to involvement with politics. Many examples of political action on the part of religious Jews, such as their objection to women praying at the Western Wall as well as their opposition to the founding of an Israeli gay pride celebration, have received attention from the contemporary press. Activism such as this serves to exemplify the efforts made by Jewish fundamentalists to push toward an Israel strictly governed by religion.

In addition to smaller scale religious activism, Jewish fundamentalists have also founded political parties, most notably the National Religious Party whose primary focus is the promotion of a religiously governed Israel. Yet, there is one issue that seems to overshadow all others in press coverage of Israel. It is probably impossible to live in the Western world and not be familiar with terms such as 'the West Bank', 'Judea and Sameria', 'Jewish settlements', and 'the Gaza Strip'. Many residents of these settlements feel so strongly about their claim to the land that they are willing to face martyrdom for their cause. In order to fully grasp the ideology of religious Zionists, it would be logical to start by examining the early years of modern Israeli statehood when the influence of such groups began impacting Israel's policy as well as global perceptions of the country.

The creation of Israel as an independent state was met with hostility from surrounding nations. The first two years of modern Israel were spent with its people engaged in war with neighboring Arab countries. While Israel's resistance to outside hostilities was continuously impressive for such a young country, it would be nearly twenty years after the state's formation when an Israeli military accomplishment truly captured the attention of the world community. In June of 1967, the Israel Defense Forces

unexpectedly emerged victorious from a war with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.⁵ In addition to the boost in morale among its citizens, Israel's victory in the Six-Day War also resulted in territorial gains for the state. The West Bank, Syrian Heights, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and East Jerusalem all were suddenly conquered by the Israeli military. The victory and subsequent territorial gains led to a surge of nationalistic feelings among many of the world's more religiously devout Jews—as well as among many secular Jews. Israel's success in the Six-Day War convinced religious Jews that Israel was a viable nation and that its success could be interpreted as God giving back to them their homeland the way it was described in the Hebrew scriptures.

The country's success in the Six-Day War served as a catalyst that inspired a greater degree of political activism among Zionists supporting the movement for religious reasons.⁶ Ian Lustick describes how the religious Zionists' saw the territorial gains as evidence of divine intervention.

“In general, Jewish fundamentalists believe that the wars of 1967 and 1973 show that God speaks to Israel not just through disaster, but through deliverance. The Six-Day War, by which Israel came into possession of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the core areas of the biblical land of Israel, as well as the enthusiasm and excitement about the land which it awakened in many Jews, are seen as God's signal that the process of redemption has begun.”⁷

Many members of the religious faction of Zionism began to increase their level of political activism following the addition of the formerly Arab-held territories into Israel's holdings. The years following the Six-Day War saw a religious political party

⁵ For further information detailing the Six-Day War, see: Sachar, *A History of Israel*.

⁶ “For Jewish fundamentalists, history is God's means of communicating with His people. Political trends and events contain messages to Jews that provide instructions, reprimands, and rewards. Political and historical analysis, properly undertaken is equivalent to the interpretation of God's will.” Ian S. Lustick, “Jewish Fundamentalism and the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse,” in *Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York: New York University Press, New York, 1993). 113.

⁷ Lustick, “Jewish Fundamentalism and the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse,” *Jewish Fundamentalism In*

demonstrate a significant amount of influence on the Israeli government. Additionally, one rabbi emerged as a unifying figurehead for the various groups of religious Zionists.

Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook was born during Passover 1891 in a small Lithuanian town. His father, Abraham Isaac Kook, was a member of the local rabbinate. During Tzvi's childhood, his father became the first chief rabbi of Palestine upon accepting a rabbinic position in Jaffa. The elder Kook's new position brought him and his son to the Middle East. During his adolescent years, Tzvi Kook studied at Torat Chaim Yeshiva in Jerusalem's Old City. As his son was devoting himself to Torah study, the senior Rav Kook became a prolific voice in the call for religious as well as non-religious Jews to join the Zionist cause. Realizing the predominantly secular makeup of the World Zionist Organization, the elder Kook chose to apply Kabbalistic elements to the ideology behind his support of the movement. Rav Kook, Sr.'s Kabbala-based reasoning was known as the 'sacralization of the profane', which can be described as the "religious legitimization of secular and atheist Zionism."⁸ That is to say, according to Rav Kook's theology, the activism performed by secular Zionists was sacred work whether or not they acknowledged its sacredness.

Although Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook favored a religiously motivated Zionism, his acceptance of the movement in its secular form serves as an example of his moderate political persuasion. While the senior Kook's son Tzvi would follow in his father's footsteps in becoming a member of the rabbinate, the younger Kook would prove to have political opinions which fell to the far right of those held by his father. Rabbi Tzvi Kook

Comparative Perspective, 113.

⁸ Ehud Sprinzak, "The Politics, Institutions, and Culture of Gush Emunim," in *Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York: New York University Press 1993), 119.

never published a collection of his works and lacked his father's level of Talmudic knowledge.⁹ Yet even in the absence of these aforementioned accomplishments, the younger Rav Kook proved himself to be an extremely charismatic leader in Israeli society. As his own rabbinic career evolved, Tzvi Kook's theology garnered him a large and devoted group of followers. Because of Tzvi Kook's never having published, much of his ideology had to be collected from secondary sources, namely his followers and those who studied his teachings with him.

While it would be a mistake to exclude the value of being the son of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, when considering Tzvi Kook's construction of authority, it is not the way in which he persuaded people to share his views. The younger Kook's greatest accomplishment in cultivating a captive audience was the result of his taking over the yeshiva founded by his father in 1924.¹⁰ Mercaz HaRav, translated as 'Center of the Rabbi',¹¹ is a Jerusalem-based institution where students are exposed to large amount of Rav Tzvi Kook's religious ideology concerning, among other topics, a greater land of Israel. While the younger Kook espoused an agenda much more rightwing than his father's, his charisma resulted in a growing number of dedicated followers. Mercaz Harav was quite small in its enrollment in the years prior to the Six Day War. However, a sizable majority of Rabbis that studied at the Yeshiva remained among Kook's staunchest supporters, spreading his message of religious Zionism long after leaving the institution.

Rabbi Tzvi Kook based a great deal of his Zionist ideology on the teachings of his father. While the elder Rav Kook and his son both argued in favor of a greater religious

⁹ Israel Shahak and Norman Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 55.

¹⁰ Friends of Mercaz HaRav. <http://www.mercazharav.org/about.htm> (accessed April 2007).

¹¹ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 55.

influence on the politics of Israel, the younger Kook's ideas were far more radical.

Rabbi Tzvi Kook encouraged his followers to wholly denounce secular Zionism, even going so far as to liken the movement to Satanism.¹² Also rejected by the Kook ideology is any attempt by Jews toward normalization. A key concept of the Jewish fundamentalists is the emphasis upon Jews as a unique people. Numerous Jewish fundamentalist thinkers that followed Kook, most prominently Meir Kahane, also strongly emphasized the uniqueness of the Jewish people. Kook's own interpretation of this doctrine prompted him to argue that secular law should not be implemented in a Jewish state. Instead, laws taken directly from scriptural and Talmudic sources alone should govern Jews. Kook and his followers imagined a very narrow world construction; only the fundamentalists and the Orthodox Jews who agreed with their interpretation were included in their in-group. Adversely, Gentiles, Arabs, and the remainder of the Jews were all seen as comprising the adversarial 'other'.

The younger Rabbi Kook, along with his followers, adamantly championed the ideology that holds the entire land of Israel as the divinely sanctioned property of the pious Jews. Israel's victory in the Six Day War contributed to rhetoric intended to justify divine approval for the existence of Israel and was a quite successful recruitment tool for the Kook movement. By the early 1970's, the Jewish fundamentalists had become a powerful political force in Israel, with their construction of settlements in the newly won territories proving particularly popular. As was the case following the Six Day War, the fundamentalists utilized 1973's Yom Kippur War as a device for self-promotion. The surprise attacks levied by Egypt against Israel led to a high number of casualties and also

¹² Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 71.

greatly diminished morale among Israeli citizens. If the Six Day War was proof that God supported Israel, the Kook movement argued, then the Yom Kippur War was obviously to be taken as a sign of God's wrath to indicate the wrong direction Israel had taken.

Rabbi Tzvi Kook's group of followers believed that Israel had become entirely too secular in its policies. The concept of "Jewish normalization" as the nineteenth-century Zionist philosophers proposed it was completely rejected by the Jewish fundamentalists. In its place, they promoted an ideology that posited that Israel could only be successful if it was governed by scriptural authority.¹³ In addition to constructing an image of a religiously governed Israel, the younger Rabbi Kook also formed a new theology concerning the Jewish Messiah. Showing the influence of his father, Tzvi Kook accepted the Kabala-based theory of two Messiahs. However, Tzvi Kook added his own interpretation of the concept of two Messiahs that suggested the anticipated figure would not come in the form of an individual, but instead would appear as a group. Shahak and Mezvinsky explain Tzvi Kook's theory:

"The Cabbala regarded this verse [Zechariah 9:9] as evidence for two Messiahs: one riding upon an ass and the other upon a colt. The question here was: How could a collective Messiah ride upon a single ass? Kook answered the question by identifying the ass with Jews who lacked wisdom and correct faith. Kook postulated that the collective Messiah would ride upon these Jews."¹⁴

Kook and his followers use their interpretation of various Jewish theologies to suggest that they had all the characteristics of the Messiah. In doing so, they attempted to convince the rest of society that it was the fundamentalists who possessed true religious

¹³ Sprinzak, "The Politics, Institutions, and Culture of Gush Emunim," *Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective*, 66.

¹⁴ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 67.

authority. The notion of the collective Messiah being the group of Jewish fundamentalists also empowered the members of the movement. If they were the messiah, it was their duty to ensure that Israel would become the nation they believe it should be.

The self-ascribed religious authority of the Kook movement manifested itself in a number of different projects. One of these projects would quickly garner a massive amount of public attention. Beginning with the territorial gains made by Israel as a result of the Six-Day War and continuing long after the 1982 death of Rav Tzvi Kook, Jewish fundamentalists have been tireless in their efforts to populate the added territories. Claiming to be fulfilling God's own plan, the settlers built communities in areas such as the West Bank and Golan Heights regardless of the disapproval vocalized by their detractors. While not the sole group of territorial settlers, a group known as Gush Emunim is certainly the largest. Individuals adhering to this philosophy consider Tzvi Kook as their spiritual leader and following his death, retained his teachings as their key doctrine.

Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful") became a fully developed movement in 1974. The earliest Gush Emunim members were individuals who had studied at Mercaz Harav, the Kook-sponsored Yeshiva. Having been persuaded by Tzvi Kook's ideology favoring an Israel governed by religious law, the early followers of the movement insisted that all of biblical Palestine should be under Israeli control. The primary argument of the group was that Israel's Six-Day War success served as proof that God had not abandoned the people of Israel and instead had rewarded their perseverance by

increasing their territorial holdings.¹⁵ After the shock caused by the unexpected 1973 attacks on Yom Kippur, the followers of Kook swiftly put their ideology into practice. To the members of Gush Emunim, the violence of the Yom Kippur War was evidence of God's disapproval concerning Israel's current secular direction. Therefore, they believed that only by assuring Israel's continued possession of Judea and Samaria in their entirety would Israel be fulfilling God's plan for the country.

Gush Emunim's work toward territorial expansion garnered support from the majority of Israeli Jews. While the bulk of the population was certainly more moderate in their ideologies than the religious Zionists professed to be, general consensus held that Gush Emunim members contributed positively to Israeli society. Perhaps the most obvious reason for such public approval was the strong patriotism found in Gush Emunim's religious ideology. Just as land settlements were posited as a religious obligation, national defense was also seen as pleasing to God. "When Gush Emunim appeared, its lay leaders and especially its rabbis began educating and inspiring young NRP followers to adopt the military profession as a religious duty, to join the combat and elite units of the army and to become officers."¹⁶ Likely as a result of so closely associating religious themes with military service, young Gush Emunim members garnered recognition as being among the Israel Defense Force's best soldiers, and therefore received a great deal of respect from their fellow Israelis. Additionally, Gush Emunim's rabbis appealed to their young followers to become members of the National Religious Party. Doing this would ensure the continued support in the political arena for

¹⁵ Nicholas de Lange and Miri Freud-Kandel, *Modern Judaism: An Oxford Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224.

¹⁶ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 90.

expanding Israel's borders.

Many of the Gush Emunim youth attend Hesder Yeshivot, religious schools sponsored by Israel's National Religious Party. The schools' curriculums are designed to provide both military training and Talmudic study. Such a formula has proven effective in producing extremely competent IDF soldiers. For example, historic accounts between the years 1982 and 1985 suggest that soldiers trained in a school sponsored by the National Religious Party had a significantly higher number of battlefield victories during the Lebanon War than did units without Hesder Yeshivot soldiers. As a result of being so closely linked to a political party, the soldiers coming from Hesder Yeshivot were allowed to participate in a different form of military service. Rather than serving a full three-year term in the IDF, the National Religious Party successfully lobbied for three six-month terms. Because the religious education provided by Hesder Yeshivot was coupled with an emphasis on the importance of military service, an ideology supporting the use of military means for the fulfillment of God's plan for Israel became even more deeply engrained in the minds of the youth affiliated with religious Zionism. To Israeli outsiders, the Hesder Yeshivot soldiers were seen as both pious Jews and patriotic Israeli citizens.

While their earliest years as a full-fledged movement was characterized by a large amount of public goodwill directed toward Gush Emunim, their reputation was eventually blemished. If only one single event could be selected as the catalyst for changing the public perception of Gush Emunim, it would likely be the 1984 discovery of the Jewish Underground. "Suddenly it was learned that the extralegalism of several

distinguished members of the movement extended to premeditated killing of Arabs.”¹⁷

While it should certainly be made clear that a large number of the Gush Emunim members rejected such drastic actions, the faction that planned the killings was not without its sympathizers. Regardless of the number of Jewish fundamentalists that actually supported such actions, as the news of the plots spread, the public image of Gush Emunim was irreparably tarnished. The majority of Israel’s Jewish citizens were undoubtedly displeased with the negative global attention brought to their country as a result of the escalating conflict between Palestinians and the Gush Emunim settlers.

It could be argued that the tension existing between Gush Emunim and the Palestinian Liberation Organization¹⁸ would inevitably escalate to violence. While the Palestinians demanded a homeland of their own, members of Gush Emunim insisted that ownership of Eretz Israel in its entirety was their divine right. Backed by the support of the National Religious Party, Gush Emunim made political activism an integral part of its agenda. The movement began under the left-leaning Labor government, and although significantly different in their political views, the Knesset majority was supportive of the Gush Emunim settlements. However, it was under the more conservative Likud party that the settlers gained the bulk of their political clout. Following the rise to power of the Likud party in 1977, members of the National Religious Party saw an opportunity to align with a mainstream political party that held views much closer to their own than did the previous Labor government. Under the Likud government, extremely right-wing

¹⁷ Sprinzak, "The Politics, Institutions, and Culture of Gush Emunim," *Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective*, 124.

¹⁸ The Palestinian Liberation Organization was founded in October 1964 as a multi-party group that represented the Palestinian people. Its original charter stated intent to destroy the state of Israel, but more recently it has come to support a two state solution, allowing for both Israel and a Palestinian state. The Avalon Project: The Palestinian National Charter, <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/plocov.htm>

parties, such as the Tehiya party and Moledet, Israel's most right-wing party, were formed.¹⁹ Likud offered Gush Emunim the opportunity to expand its number of settlements as well as make inroads into the government of the Israeli state.

The notion that Gush Emunim flourished under Likud administrations lends an element of irony to the historical event that led to the settlers' first major clash with the Israeli government. It was Likud Prime Minister Menachem Begin who agreed to meet with United States President Jimmy Carter and Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat at Camp David in 1978. The resulting Camp David Accord promised relief from the long-running hostilities between Israel and Egypt. However, Israel's promise to return the Sinai Peninsula to the Egyptian government infuriated members of Gush Emunim as well as the leaders of the National Religious Party. Any promise that included the surrender of Israel's land holdings could only be viewed as disobedience to God's plan for Israel. Yet even though Jewish fundamentalists were quite vocal in their opposition to the compromise over the Sinai Peninsula, they maintained government support regarding the expansion of the religious settlements. Begin was largely supportive of the settlements and approved the construction of additional settlements.

Throughout much of the 1980's, Likud controlled the Knesset. Only Shimon Peres' 1984 to 1986 tenure interrupted the run of Likud Prime Ministers. Although a Likud government allowed for more freedom to the Gush Emunim settlement building projects, as Likud did not oppose or even discourage Gush Emunim's expansionary efforts, the freedom to expand the settlements did not come without consequences for

(accessed June 1, 2007).

¹⁹ Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 57.

Israel. The majority of Gush Emunim members shared a military background and religious ideology promoting the expansion of Israel's borders. These two factors contributed to the fact that incidents of violence between Palestinians and Jewish settlers became increasingly common. In 1987, the Palestinian Liberation Organization declared an Intifada against Israel, carrying with it the promise of even greater violence.²⁰ Despite protests from the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the Gush Emunim members were undaunted in their desire to expand the borders of modern Israel to match those described in the Hebrew scriptures.

Even with the lives lost during the First Intifada, members of Gush Emunim were outraged when Labor Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed to the Oslo Accords in 1993 as a means of achieving peace with the Palestinians. In reaction to images of Palestinians celebrating the monumental event, the religious Zionists denounced Rabin as a traitor. The reaction of many religious Zionists to Rabin's agreement concerning the Oslo Accords is described by Shahak: "This hatred, directed mostly at Rabin and his ministers, was consistent with the Cabbala, which held that the redemption of the Jews had almost occurred at various times only to be prevented each time because a majority of the nation opted to follow a heretic or a traitor."²¹ The religious Zionists were livid and did not hesitate in expressing this by accusing Rabin of being a hindrance to the will of God. The Jewish fundamentalists continued to posit themselves as the messiah described by Tzvi Kook and Rabin and his supporters were believed to be in direct conflict with God's own plan for the growth of Israel.

²⁰ The Intifada was an organized resistance to Israel by the Palestinians. Actions ranging from civil disobedience to acts of violence were utilized by the Palestinian Liberation Organization as a means of expressing their discontent with the Israeli government.

The anger prompted by the Oslo Accords led to stronger feelings of nationalism among the Jewish fundamentalists than ever before. One of the most unfortunate examples of this nationalistic expression is found in the case of Baruch Goldstein. Regardless of his training as a medical doctor, Goldstein refused to administer any treatment to Arabs or Gentiles in general, except in the most extreme circumstances, giving his reading of the Halacha as the justification.²² Certainly Tzvi Kook's understanding of the Jews as a unique people influenced this reading. In the case of Goldstein, it was translated in terms of Jewish life being more valuable than the life of a non-Jew. Goldstein adhered to this ideology throughout his military service. During his tenure in the IDF, Goldstein was twice reassigned to new battalions. On one occasion two Druze soldiers requested an additional doctor out of concern that Goldstein would refuse to treat them should they be injured. Although this request was granted, Goldstein himself requested another reassignment to South Lebanon because the Hebron Brigade would have called for him to treat Arab patients.

As a result of repeated complaints against Goldstein, a group of medical unit commanders sought to have him court-martialed. The doctor's high-ranking supporters assured the charges would never come to fruition. In order to prevent the court-martialing, Goldstein was moved from an official IDF battalion to a position as physician for Kiryat Arba, a Kook-inspired Gush Emunim settlement near Hebron. The doctor's new assignment placed him in an environment where individuals who shared his fundamentalist views surrounded him. In February of 1994, while still residing at Kirya

²¹ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 86.

²² Shahak states that should Goldstein approach an accident where an Arab was severely injured, he would only administer treatment until another doctor arrived to assume the care. Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish*

Arba, Goldstein entered the Arab side of the Cave of Machpelah and opened fire.²³ At the end of Goldstein's massacre, twenty-nine Arabs had been killed. Amidst the hail of gunfire, a few of the Muslim worshippers wrested the gun away from Goldstein before bludgeoning him to death.

The Mosque of Abraham, also known to Jews as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, is considered a sacred place for both Muslims and Jews. Goldstein's actions resulted in Arab-led riots and outrage from many of Israel's Jews. While most Israelis were horrified by the Goldstein killings, many of his fellow fundamentalists were vocal in their support of his actions. Groups of pro-Goldstein supporters traveled to Jerusalem, many wearing buttons stating, "Dr. Goldstein cured Israel's ills," as a means of showing their approval of his actions.²⁴ The funeral service for the assassin became a forum for nationalistic rhetoric. Numerous mourners attended Goldstein's memorial service and several eulogies were devoted to extolling his virtues. Religious neighborhoods were covered in images of the doctor. To those subscribing to the ideology associated with religious Zionism, Baruch Goldstein had become a martyr for the Jewish fundamentalist cause.

The Israeli government, headed at the time by Yitzhak Rabin, quickly denounced Goldstein's extremism. As a punitive action, the Knesset dissolved the Kach and 'Kahane Lives' political parties, labeling both right-wing groups as terrorist organizations.²⁵ Although formally sanctioned by their own government, the Jewish fundamentalists were undaunted. Throughout Rabin's second term as prime minister they were an increasingly vocal opponent to the leader's attempts at creating an end to the ongoing conflict between

Fundamentalism in Israel, 100.

²³ The Cave of Machpelah, often called The Mosque of Abraham by Muslims, is a sacred site for both Muslims and Jews who both use the cave as a prayer site.

Israel and the Palestinians. The Gush Emunim settlers were clear in their insistence that Israel cease negotiations with Arafat, but the process continued in spite of their protests. The rhetoric of the religious nationalists provoked their audience with suggestions that Israel's giving up of any land would be nothing short of a defiance of the divine order.

Provocative language constructing Yitzhak Rabin as a traitor and his negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization in direct opposition to the Torah eventually reached its zenith on November 4, 1995²⁶. Prime Minister Rabin, having just addressed an audience of over one hundred thousand people at a peace rally in Tel Aviv's Municipality Square, was on his way back to his limousine. Before Rabin could step inside the vehicle he sustained three gunshot wounds to his body. Within two hours, Yitzhak Rabin had been officially pronounced dead. His assassin was Yigal Amir, a twenty-five year old student who strongly identified with the ideology of religious Zionism. Both Amir and his supporters described Rabin as a 'rodef' and therefore deserving of execution according to their interpretation of Jewish Law.²⁷ With Tzvi Kook's teachings firmly ingrained in the minds of Jewish fundamentalists, the killing of Rabin was seen as religious duty. To Jewish fundamentalists, his death was necessary in order to prevent actions that could result in the transfer of Israeli land to the Palestinians.

Many right-wing extremists considered the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin a victory for their cause. Adversely, many of the more moderate and liberal Israelis were enraged by the event. Leah Rabin, the Prime Minister's widow, accused her late

²⁴ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 101.

²⁵ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Bedford, MA: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 447.

²⁶ As shown in the Smith text, one artistic rendering of Yitzhak Rabin depicted the prime minister wearing an SS uniform.

²⁷ Rodef can be roughly translated as "pursued individual". Cohen and Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity*, 59.

husband's primary political adversary Benjamin Netanyahu of bearing some responsibility for her husband's death. While Netanyahu, a member of Likud and future Israeli Prime Minister, vehemently denied such implications, Leah Rabin was not being entirely unreasonable. Netanyahu often spoke at anti-Labor party rallies that catered directly to an audience of Gush Emunim settlers and other Jewish fundamentalist groups. Additionally, Netanyahu was staunchly opposed to the Oslo Accords, "During the highly charged Knesset debate where Oslo 2 was approved by a narrow 61-59 margin, he declared that Rabin and his government were 'removed from the Jewish tradition...and Jewish values' and were threatening the Jewish homeland, accusations that led Rabin to call Netanyahu a liar."²⁸ Netanyahu's catering to the religious right continued when he became prime minister in 1996. The new prime minister selected five parties in the formation of his cabinet, four of which were religiously based.

That more moderate parties continue to hold the majority in Israeli politics suggests that the ideologies of religious fundamentalism held by groups such as Gush Emunim are not supported by a majority of Israeli Jews. The success of Jewish fundamentalist efforts to prevent any land transfer to the Palestinians has served to color the perception of modern Israel throughout the world. One cannot consult either European or North American news sources without learning of new violence occurring between Israeli settlers and Palestinians on quite a frequent basis, thus proving the impact of the religious settlements on the global perception of Israel. Even as the Knesset began ordering settlers to vacate areas within the territories inhabited primarily by the Palestinians, the religious Zionist settlers refusing those orders have garnered a great deal

²⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 453.

of media attention.²⁹ In the Jewish fundamentalist worldview, public perception is irrelevant. The Gush Emunim settlers believe their activism is in line with God's plan for the development of modern Israel. Amidst the attention that the violence between Jewish fundamentalist settlers and the Palestinians garners in the press, there are also many individuals on both sides working to arrive at a peaceable resolution to the long-running conflict.³⁰ Yet, as the previous section has shown, Jewish fundamentalists believe they are following the will of God and, therefore, cannot relent in their mission to ensure all of greater Israel is inhabited and governed by the Jews.

²⁹ Dean Yates, "Israel Starts to Evacuate Gaza's Last Settlement," RedOrbit Breaking News, August 22, 2006, http://www.redorbit.com/news/general/215462/israel_starts_to_evacuate_gazas_last_settlement/index.html (accessed April 22, 2007).

³⁰ Matthew Gutman, "Violence Rocks West Bank, Gaza After Israeli Raid," *USA Today*, March 14, 2006, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-03-14-jericho_x.htm (accessed April 22, 2007).

III. Christian Zionism

Jewish fundamentalists and Palestinians are not the only groups who have emerged with a vested interest in the Palestinian territories. Many evangelical Christians,³¹ particularly in the United States, have voiced their own wishes concerning the state of Israel. These Christians have offered their own support to Jewish fundamentalists and have appealed to the more militant members of the religious Zionist movement to continue to refuse any compromise that requires Israel to give land to the Palestinians. However, as the previously noted history of Jewish fundamentalism has clearly proven, religious Zionists have often resorted to violence as a means of preventing any such transfer of land. This section will discuss Christian Zionists. These groups of Christians also argue in favor of Jews occupying and governing all of greater Israel. Using examples of their methods in promoting the expansion of Israel's borders and their rhetoric meant to garner support, it will become evident that many Christian Zionist groups advocate violent means toward achieving their own vision of Israel.

Those not directly involved with Zionism might initially see it as a movement created exclusively for Jews who support an Israeli homeland. However, particularly in contemporary Western society, Jews are not the only group who has demonstrated strong support for the preservation of Israel as a Jewish state. Stemming primarily from Christian Zionists' own exegesis of both the Old and New Testament, a sizeable group of Protestant Evangelicals has taken up the Zionist cause since the beginning of Zionism itself. Although Christian Philo-Zionists can be traced back to the time of Herzl, it was not until Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967 that the group was able to evolve

³¹ Evangelical Christians are primarily distinguishable by their strong emphasis on proselytizing to non-

into the powerful political movement it has become at present. The second portion of this essay will discuss the Christian Zionist movement, with its roots in Christian Millennialism.³² Christian Zionism asserts its influence in both Israel and the United States to further its own theological agenda. Special attention will be given to both prominent figures and historical events in the evolution of the movement. The purpose of emphasizing Christian Zionism's attainment of political power in the United States will help illustrate the primary way in which Christian Zionists maximize their own influence concerning Israel's interaction with the Palestinians.

To present a cohesive, linear portrait of Christian Zionism would be a nearly impossible task. The reason for this is due to the movement's lack of formal organization in structure and theology until well into its existence. Therefore, it will be more reasonable to discuss the movement via a two-pronged approach. Before examining the political activism of Christian Zionists, a discussion of its theology will prove helpful in explaining the level of commitment exhibited by many of the Christian Zionists. The basis that led to Evangelical Christian support of a Jewish state stems from a theology known as Dispensational Premillennialism. John Nelson Darby, a prominent Protestant theologian, developed the Premillennial ideology in the late nineteenth century. Based largely on his reading of the Old Testament scriptures such as Zechariah 9-12 and Ezekiel 37-38 and New Testament scriptures such as I Thessalonians 4-5 and the book of Revelation, Darby claimed that history is most accurately seen as a succession of eras characterized by events important to Christianity. The earliest eras, or dispensations, are

Christians in order to persuade them to become "born again" and thus, convert to their form of Christianity.

³² Christian Millennialists are notable for their belief that "born again" Christians will be "raptured," or removed from the Earth before the return of Jesus signifies the beginning of the millennium.

events described in the Old Testament. History began, according to Premillennial theology, with the Genesis account of the origin of the universe and its second phase is highlighted by the great flood, also described in Genesis. These two eras are respectively known as the Age of Adam and the Age of Noah. Following the Noah account, the remainder of the Hebrew Bible comprises the Age of the Prophets.

According to Premillennial theologians, the birth of Jesus marks the beginning of the Age of Jesus. This dispensation continues even until today. It is during the Age of Jesus and the following Age of Armageddon that the importance of Israel can be clearly seen. The main objective of Premillennialists concerning Israel involves the biblical concept of the Jews as God's chosen people.³³ John Nelson Darby and those who agree with his theology argue that the preservation of Israel as a Jewish state is an integral factor of fulfilling the prophecy presented in the New Testament Book of Revelation, and in doing so, will hasten the return of Jesus, whose presence on Earth will begin the final dispensation. Premillennialist theologian James Grant wrote, “The personal coming of Christ, to establish His millennial reign on earth, will not take place until the Jews are restored to their own land, and the enemies of Christ and the Jews have gathered together their armies from all parts of the world, and have commenced the siege on Jerusalem.”³⁴ While such ideology certainly presents a frightening image, it also can be seen as a beneficial tool that can be employed by religious Jewish Zionists, by providing them with an ally in their attempts to maintain the sovereignty of Israel as a Jewish state. Even so, Premillennialist Christian theology specific to the Jewish people predicts their violent

³³ Genesis 12:1-9 is generally cited as biblical evidence of the Jews being God's chosen people. Other passages cited as proof of God's covenant with Israel include Leviticus 24:44-45 and Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

³⁴ Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1970), 47.

end. Christian Zionists accept this end as inevitable and therefore do not consider the safety of Israel's Jews when promoting the expansion of Israel's borders.

While the status of the Jews as the chosen people of God plays a strong role in Premillennialism, the acceptance of this status does not afford the Jews a preferred role when Armageddon begins³⁵. According to Darby's theology, unless Jews convert to Christianity when Armageddon begins, they will be subject to even worse atrocities than are reserved for other non-believers. Scholar Brenda Brasher provides a detailed account of the Premillennial image of the Jews' status in a post-Armageddon world. Brasher explains, "Jews must be present to serve as the primary objects of God's wrath; however, they [Christian Premillennialists] claim that almost all will die unredeemed. Only those Jews who are 'brought to faith' will survive. Fundamentalists claim that the slaughter of those Jews not brought to faith 'purges' the world of disbelief."³⁶ The Brasher passage serves to indicate that Premillennial theology is not ultimately beneficial to Jewish Zionism. Rather than simply encouraging the support of Israel as a means of protecting the interests of a group seen as religious equals, Premillennial Christians advocate the restoration of Israel to its biblical borders with the expectation that the Jews will eventually stand as an example of the consequences of rejecting Christianity. This image of Israel is ultimately harmful, because Christian Premillennialists posit that Jewish casualties are inevitable both before and during Armageddon. They therefore do not give pause to the retaliation that can be sparked in the expansion of Israel's borders.

³⁵ "Through a series of covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David, God made Israel His chosen people and promised to establish the Messiah on David's throne forever. In Daniel 7-9, nineteenth-century dispensationalists believed, God spelled out the divine plan: because of its sin, Israel will be subjugated by four successive gentile powers until, finally, the "times of the gentiles" are complete." Timothy Weber, "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend," *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1998, 40.

³⁶ Brasher, Brenda, "When Your Friend Is Your Enemy," in *Millennial Visions*, ed. Martha F. Lee

As noted in the Brasher passage, Premillennialism maintains that some Jews will eventually be converted to Christianity. Although the majority of Christian Zionists who travel to Israel are forbidden by their respective churches from proselytizing to the Jews living in the Gush Emunim settlements, not all are bound by this restriction³⁷. Because one of the central aspects of not just Premillennial Christians, but Christian evangelism in general, is proselytism to non-Christians, Jewish settlements courting support from Christian Zionists will also be forced to contend with being persuaded to convert to Christianity. With the Gush Emunim settlements set up to serve as a place to support a communal Jewish lifestyle, proselytism from an outside religious group would certainly be unwelcome.

Because of the theologically-based argument that the preservation of Israel is integral to fulfillment of Premillennial prophecy, both Israel and the Jews are devalued by groups that accept this form of Premillennialism. The Christian Zionists do not place any value on the efforts made by the Jewish people in constructing their own state. Instead, the creation of Israel is reduced to a predestined event in the unfolding of Premillennialist Christian history. Hal Lindsey, a modern adherent to Darby's theology, brought the notion of Israel's statehood as fulfillment of Premillennialist theology to a mainstream North American audience. His book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, exemplifies the marginalization of the work of the Zionists in favor of predestined biblical prophecy. Lindsey writes, "The same prophets who predicted the world-wide exile and persecution

(Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 138.

³⁷ The International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, an organization that sponsors many Christians' visits to Israeli settlements has specific rules against proselytizing. "Ted Beckett [an ICEJ representative] tells participating churches that people are always free to share their faith if asked, but they are not permitted to engage in any kind of overt proselytism. He says that he will "yank the charter" of any congregation in his project that tries to make a direct religious appeal to Jews in Israel." Timothy Weber, "How Evangelicals

of the Jews also predicted their restoration as a nation. It is surprising that many could not see the obvious: since the first part of these prophecies came true we should have anticipated that the second part would come true, also.”³⁸ Lindsey’s argument suggests that the fate of Israel is not dependent on the actions of the Jewish people. Placing the focus entirely upon the fulfillment of prophecy takes history and the future out of the hands of the Jews and instead suggests that the fate of Israel is completely based on the role of the land in Christian eschatology and God’s plan for the world’s future.

Christian Premillennialism predates Israel’s statehood. However, two events related to Israeli sovereignty proved essential in garnering widespread support for Zionist ideology among Premillennial Christians. The first event that led to a major increase in pro-Zionist Christian propaganda³⁹ was the signing of the Balfour Declaration.⁴⁰ It is certainly noteworthy that Lord Balfour has been described by biographers as himself a Millennialist. His background in both Old and New Testament exegesis has been cited as a reason for his support for the construction of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁴¹

The increased Christian interest in Israel resulting from the Balfour Declaration spread far beyond the religious leanings of Lord Balfour. The signing of the Balfour Declaration served as a tool used in Christian Zionist rhetoric for decades after the document was created. Sizer explains, “Dr. M.R. DeHaan, founder of Radio Bible Class

Became Israel’s Best Friend,” *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1998. 46.

³⁸ Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 48.

³⁹ Yaakov Ariel describes the 1917 issuance of the Balfour Declaration as “indications that the ground was being prepared for the arrival of the Messiah” and “Their [Christian Zionists’] joy over the new regime in Palestine dominated two ‘prophetic conferences’ that took place in Philadelphia and New York in 1918.” Yaakov Ariel, “An Unexpected Alliance,” *Modern Judaism*, 26.1 (2006): 74-100.

⁴⁰ See: “British Foreign Minister Lord Arthur Balfour: The Balfour Declaration” Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds. *The Israel-Arab Reader*, 6th Ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 16.

⁴¹ Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 63-66. See also, See: Ariel, Yaakov, “An Unexpected Alliance,” *Modern Judaism*, 26.1 (2006): 74-100.

Worldwide Gospel Broadcast, was regularly heard on more than 600 radio stations worldwide. In 1947, in his published studies on the book of Daniel, he interpreted the events before and after the Balfour Declaration in the light of the Abrahamic covenant and Belshazzar's 'Handwriting on the Wall.'⁴² Christian theologians with Premillennial leanings used the signing of the Balfour Declaration, which wrested control of Palestine away from Arabs and placed it under the control of Britain, as a means of justifying their argument that the fulfillment of divine prophecy could be readily observed. With speakers such as DeHaan reaching a large and widespread audience, Christian support for the Zionist cause among United States Protestants was able to gain greater exposure.

Although the Balfour Declaration and Israel's subsequent independence were both catalysts for amassing the support of Christian Zionists, it was another event that proved to be the most powerful device to date in the construction of Christian Zionist rhetoric. Israel's 1967 victory in combat against surrounding Arab countries appeared to defy all logical explanation. According to followers of Premillennial theology the reason behind the seemingly inexplicable Israeli victory in the Six-Day War was simple. Just as all the past events in Jewish history had been pre-ordained by God, so also had been Israel's victory in this war. Various Christian evangelists began discussing Israel's success in the Six-Day War and its place in New Testament prophecy.

In accordance with their own understanding of Old and New Testament Scriptures, the Christian Zionists believed God required that Eretz Israel in its entirety should be under Jewish control before Jesus would return.⁴³ With that in mind, it comes

⁴² Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 85.

⁴³ Eretz Israel, or "Land of Israel" is a term used to denote the boundaries of Israel presented in the Hebrew Bible, in particular, as described in Genesis 15:18-21.

as no surprise that Israel's land gains resulting from the Six-Day War proved an encouraging sign to Christian Zionists that the biblical prophecies were quickly being realized. Religious scholar Wendell Stearns, in his description of the effects of the Six-Day War on Christian Zionists, explains: "The artificial boundary line that had divided Jerusalem was broken down in 1967 when Israel, in the miraculous Six-Day War, reunited the city which had been 'trodden down by Gentiles' for nearly two thousand years. Jerusalem was again under Jewish jurisdiction."⁴⁴ The Six-Day War opened the door for Christian Premillennialism to achieve an inroad into American politics. Israel had proven it was capable of defending itself from outside aggressors and thus showed itself to be a viable, self-preserving political body. The victory allowed Israel to present itself as an ally, rather than a liability, to politically influential Americans who did not subscribe to Premillennial theology.

Although there were territorial gains in the Golan Heights and Gaza Strip acquired by Israel because of its Six-Day War victory, for Christian Zionists, the most important acquisition was Jerusalem. Scholar Timothy Weber explains, "Now the modern State of Israel looked more like the 'Bible Lands' maps on the walls of Sunday school rooms."⁴⁵ Premillennialist theology predicted that only when Israel's borders would expand to the size they were during the biblical era would Jesus return. Following the Six-Day War, the territorial gains served as proof-positive to Premillennialists that they were witnessing fulfillment of prophecy before their eyes. Because their interpretation of biblical prophecy was seemingly validated, Christian Zionists became more fervent in

⁴⁴ Wendell Stearns, *Biblical Zionism* (Holland: Hilversum, 2004), 123.

⁴⁵ Timothy Weber, "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend," *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1998, 45.

their support for the actions taken by the Israeli military. Israeli General Moshe Dayan was exalted as the 'Miracle Man of the Age' by Christian Zionists, and several Christian theologians, including Jerry Falwell, compared Dayan's campaign to the United States' involvement attempting to halt Communism in Vietnam. Falwell in particular publicly claimed that the Six-Day War was instrumental to his commitment to the Christian Zionist agenda.

Whether or not Jerry Falwell became a Christian Zionist as a direct result of Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, it is certainly true that he was singularly the most prominent advocate for its agenda in the United States. He became a Southern Baptist minister with socially conservative leanings at quite a young age. However, upon Menachem Begin's becoming prime minister of Israel in 1977, Falwell became strongly involved in the United States' relations with Israel. Begin was quite hospitable toward Falwell, as evidenced by Falwell's repeated visits to the country and meetings with the prime minister while Begin was in power. The relationship forged between Jerry Falwell and the Likud Party, of which Begin was a member, laid the groundwork for more open support from American Christian Zionists on behalf of the Gush Emunim settlers⁴⁶. For Jerry Falwell, the relationship with Prime Minister Begin was rewarding on a personal level as well. Begin presented Falwell with a Lear Jet in 1979. Begin also named Falwell the first Gentile recipient of the Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky Medal for Zionist excellence in 1980⁴⁷. Falwell's receipt of this honor was a result of the Protestant minister's advocacy on behalf of Zionism. The gifts given to Falwell by the Israeli prime minister

⁴⁶ Israel's Knesset is comprised of multiple political parties. Likud is the largest in membership of the conservative parties.

⁴⁷ Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 90.

suggest that Begin was aware of the support Falwell and his followers could offer Israel and he intended to show Falwell his appreciation of that support. Additionally, Begin's graciousness toward Falwell suggests that the Prime Minister not only accepted, but also welcomed the assistance that Christian Zionists were offering Israel.

The amicable relationship between Menachem Begin and Jerry Falwell played a role in the latter achieving a position as a fixture in American politics, particularly in the 1980s. While Falwell's Moral Majority, founded in 1980, began to extend its conservative Evangelical Christian agenda into the American social policy as a whole, advocating the United States' support of Israel remained a primary objective for Falwell himself. This is certainly evidenced by his continued relationship with Begin. Following Israel's 1981 bombing of an Iraqi nuclear reactor, Prime Minister Begin contacted Falwell before he spoke with Ronald Regan, in hopes that Falwell would inform American Christians that Israel's actions were warranted. Similarly, Falwell became Israel's chief American apologist following the Sabra and Shatila massacres in Lebanon⁴⁸. Falwell instantly came to Israel's defense and labeled all media coverage that was unfavorable to Israel's actions as propaganda.⁴⁹ Begin and Falwell's relationship was indeed symbiotic. Begin used Falwell as a means to garner favor for some of his administration's more controversial actions, while Falwell's interaction with the Israeli politician afforded him clout in lobbying the American legislature to embrace his religious agenda. Additionally, Falwell's commitment to Israel and promotion of the

⁴⁸ Sabra and Shatila were the sites of two camps housing PLO refugees; IDF soldiers guarded their boundaries. On September 16, 1982, members of a Lebanese militia entered the camps and began killing their inhabitants without any attempts to halt the murders made by the Israeli soldiers. The massacres resulted in numerous Palestinian casualties and although Israeli soldiers did not fire upon the refugees, Israel was harshly criticized for allowing the incident to occur. For further information on the incident, see Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to our Time*, 913-916.

state's importance to Christians served to convince even more Protestants to accept his Premillennial theology concerning Israel.

It was the symbiotic relationship between Menachem Begin and Jerry Falwell along with Falwell's open support for the West Bank settlements that opened the door to an influx of Christian Zionists both visiting and setting up missionaries in Israel. One tactic employed by Falwell meant to garner support for the Christian Zionist cause was a series of tours of Israel. The 'Old-Time Gospel Hour Tours' provide largely American tourists with guided tours of Israel, with special emphasis placed on how the visited sites are significant to Premillennial theology. Susan Harding provides an account of a guide who leads such a tour, "So real, immediate, specific, and unarguable is the future foreseen that the Old-Time Gospel Hour tour guide and Bible prophecy teacher, Harold Wilmington, buried a Protestant Bible in one of the caves in the Valley of Petra, [Jordan]."⁵⁰ Harding explains Wilmington's actions, saying: "He wrapped it in plastic and buried it for the Jews who will hide in those caves after the destruction of the Jews begins during the 'great tribulation'."⁵¹ Harding's account of the tour guide provides a unique insight into the ideology of many Christian Zionists. The hidden Protestant Bible was meant as a tool of conversion for the Jews who, according to Christian Millennial theology, will be converted to Christianity during the Age of Armageddon. This once again provides an excellent example of the ways in which Christian Zionists simply view the Jewish people as a means to achieving the end goal of their form of Christianity. Harding reports that the actions of Wilmington are not at all uncommon and indeed, that

⁴⁹ Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 91-93.

⁵⁰ Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 229.

a countless number of Protestant Bibles have been buried within the caves by Zionist Christian tourists.

Tours sponsored by Christian Zionist organizations are constructed to present as favorable an image as possible of the territory-expanding agenda of Israel's far-right politicians and theologians. Because of the encouragement among American Premillennial ministers for their congregants to participate in the tours, many scholars have been afforded the opportunity for participant observation.⁵² Both Stephen Sizer and Susan Harding have written in-depth accounts of their own participation in the Christian tours and both offer interesting insight into the tactics utilized in order to compel the tourists to accept the Christian Zionist agenda.⁵³ One of the methods used by the tours in order to accomplish this goal is the intermingling of sites connected to modern Israel's military victories with sites noted in the Old and New Testament scriptures. Sizer argues, "They [the tours] focus on the religious and political significance of contemporary Israel with speakers from the Israeli government and visits to the settlements to reinforce Israel's claim to the land and place in prophecy."⁵⁴ The practice of using the actual settlements as stopping points on the Christian tours demonstrates the attempt made by Christian Zionists to remind their audience that Israel is indeed making attempts to expand back to its biblical borders. As an added feature, tourists often stay in religious settlements, which I would argue serves as a means of demonstrating how successful

⁵¹ Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 229.

⁵² Earl Babbie describes participant observation, in particular the complete participant method as follows: "The complete participant, in this sense, may be a genuine participant in what he or she is studying or may pretend to be a genuine participant. In any event, whenever you act as the complete participant, you must let people see you only as a participant, not as a researcher." Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research, Tenth Edition* (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2004), 285.

⁵³ See Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*.

⁵⁴ Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 217.

many of them are at maintaining their existence in a volatile environment. Many of the Christian tours have an arrangement that provides housing for their tourists with Lev Ha'Aretz, an organization that manages tourism for the various West Bank settlements. Both the existence of Lev Ha'Aretz, as well as its willingness to arrange lodging in the settlements for Christian Zionists, demonstrates Jewish fundamentalists' recognition of the benefits that the support of Christians provides. Lev Ha'Aretz courts Christian Zionists by showing the Christians the West Bank settlements as well as offering Christians a chance to temporarily live in them. This experience allows the Christians to see first-hand the efforts made by Jewish fundamentalists toward expanding the borders of Israel.

While certainly the moral support for settlers and feelings of solidarity between the two religious groups fostered by these tours is helpful to both Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists, the tours also manage to inspire a great deal of monetary contributions to Jewish fundamentalist organizations. One way in which Christian Zionists have demonstrated their support for the expansion of Israel's borders is through financial contributions to various religiously motivated settlements along the West Bank⁵⁵ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities is one of the largest organizations that participates in the funding of West Bank settlements. The mission statement of CFOIC describes its goal, "CFOIC brings unconditional support to the Jewish communities and partners with the dedicated pioneers of biblical Israel to fulfill Biblical prophecy."⁵⁶ In this statement, the CFOIC reveals that its primary motivation for the support of Israel is

⁵⁵ Religiously motivated in that inhabitants of the settlements believe that it is their divinely ordained duty to expand Israel's borders to match its biblical borders.

⁵⁶ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, <http://www.cfoic.com/index.asp?mainpage=adoption>

the fulfillment of their reading of Biblical prophecy. With the endpoint of that Biblical prophecy already discussed in this essay, it becomes clear that the support offered to Israel by the CFOIC is given with the ultimate destruction of the state and its people firmly in mind.

Another tactic employed by the organization as a means of mobilizing support is its publication of maps showing the land gains of the Palestinians due to the Oslo Accord of 1993. The group's website argues that the land changes not only make Israel more open to attack from outside aggressors, but also *stand in conflict with God's plan for the country*.⁵⁷ While the motivation behind their support is harmful to the settlers, in that the CFOIC encourages settlers to ignore the changes implemented by the Oslo accord, an action that could certainly lead to violence, the fund-raising tactics of the CFOIC have proven beneficial to the settlers themselves. Money raised by the Christian Friends of Israeli Communities has purchased various amenities for the Gush Emunim settlements, ranging from medical supplies to computers.

In addition to contributing money in order to sustain the settlements, some Christian Zionist organizations make efforts to populate them with Jewish emigrants. Members of these groups travel to various places around the world in an attempt to convince Jews to make Aliyah.⁵⁸ For the Jews who agree to move to Israel, Christian Zionists arrange and fund the trip. Perhaps the most well known of these groups, Exobus,⁵⁹ focuses its mission on recruiting Ukrainian Jews for Aliyah. According to its

(accessed July 1, 2007).

⁵⁷ Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, <http://cfoic.com/index.asp?mainpage=adoption> (accessed July 1, 2007).

⁵⁸ Aliyah, literally "going up," is the term used to describe Jews who live in the Diaspora emigrating to Israel.

⁵⁹ Exobus' website provides enlightening insight into the rhetoric of Christian Zionists. Various sections on

own statistics, with the assistance of its American branch, Christians for Israel International, Exobus has financed more than 80,000 Jewish emigrations to Israel.⁶⁰ Sizer provides a description of the Exobus process, “Combining economic incentive with biblical argument, their ‘fishing’ teams visit Jewish communities and present concerts in Hebrew with song and dance. They explain from the Old Testament the biblical basis for making aliyah. Videos of émigrés from their own home town are shown, giving testimonies of how they have been blessed by moving to Israel.”⁶¹ With their active involvement in both populating and sustaining the settlements in the West Bank, it is safe to argue that Christian Zionists have become the international gentile version of organizations such as Gush Emunim.

Similar to the Jewish fundamentalists, Christian Zionists strive to keep members of the West Bank settlements motivated to continue increasing the settlements in both number and population. As previously noted, much of their own rhetoric mirrors that of the Israeli Jewish fundamentalists concerning the divine mandate of the Jews that promises them control of Eretz Israel. With the examples provided in this essay it is obvious that such movements, even if they are not Jewish, serve to benefit the individuals who populate the West Bank settlements. However, Israel’s acceptance of the Christian Zionists’ assistance comes with the risk of dangerous consequences. With Premillennial

the site feature the use of terms that are generally used by Jews, such as “Aliyah,” which are then explained to a Christian audience using scriptural interpretation. An excerpt from the organization’s mission statement explains, “The Scripture is clear in many passages like Ezekiel 36 & 37 that God’s program is physical restoration of Israel, followed by spiritual restoration of Israel and world-wide revival. It is God’s primary intention to bless the Jews in the Land and from that Land to make Jews a blessing to the whole world, bringing glory to His Holy Name (Ezekiel 36:23).” “Aliyah,” Exobus.org, <http://www.exobus.org/staticstory.asp?RGN=US&MNU=1&id=217§ion=reg0> (accessed May 5, 2007).

⁶⁰ “Personally From Phil,” Exobus.org, <http://www.exobus.org/featuresstory.asp?RGN=US&MNU=9&id=476§ion=reg10> (accessed May 5, 2007).

theology deeply entrenched in the mission of Christian Zionists, the Jews are simply seen as a tool for reaching the Christians' goal of ushering in violence. Such beliefs lead to initiatives from Christian Zionists that are anything but benevolent to the Jews living in Israel. As we shall see, many programs created by Christian Zionists stand to endanger all the citizens of Israel, both Zionist and not.

While the restoration and maintenance of Jews in Israel is paramount to the theology believed by Christian Zionists, their objective does not end there. Without conflict between Arabs and Jews, the Premillennialist expectation of a great war prompting the return of Jesus cannot occur. Because this war is seen as a necessity, many Christian Zionists advocate activities that are certain to provoke negative reactions from the Arab communities surrounding Israel. In addition to believing that the Jews must inhabit all of Eretz Israel in order to hasten the return of Jesus, Premillennialist doctrine also explains that the Temple must be rebuilt per biblical prophecy.⁶² Several prominent Christian Premillennialist leaders have demonstrated either emotional or financial support advocating the building of a third Temple.⁶³ Various Christian-supported Temple Mount movements show a large disregard for the safety of Israelis in its vilification of Muslims and encouragement to rebuild the Temple despite the presence of the Dome of the Rock, also known as the Mosque of Omar, which is now at the site where the Temple formerly

⁶¹ Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 22.

⁶² The Old Testament, particularly the Book of Daniel, is the primary source of Christian theology concerning the building of the Temple. Additionally, Christian Premillennialists apply a futurist hermeneutic to New Testament passages in order to support their desire for a new Temple to be constructed. Randall Price provides an extensive examination of the origin and evolution of Christian support for rebuilding the Temple in his book, *The Coming Last Days Temple*. For a concise, yet informative discussion of various Premillennialist writings concerning the rebuilding of the Temple, see Gershom Gorenberg, *The End of Days* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 157ff.

⁶³ Gorenberg writes, "And yet, among all those [Christians] who have heard that the Temple is essential to prophecy, that Jesus will set his feet on the Mount of Olives and enter the rebuilt sanctuary through its eastern gate, one person or a handful could conclude that they are God's instrument for clearing the ground.

stood.⁶⁴ One of the most prominent groups vocally supportive of the Temple restoration is the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, or the ICEJ. In their attempts to garner support for rebuilding the Temple, the group has worked in close contact with Gershon Solomon, the figurehead of Temple Mount Faithful, a Jewish group committed to rebuilding the Temple. Many Christian televangelists have reserved airtime during their religious programming for spokespersons requesting support for the Temple Mount Faithful, with Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network treating the restoration as one of its main objectives.

American Christian Zionists' interference with the relationship between Jews and Arab Muslims occurs with the most involved Christian Zionists' full knowledge that the consequences could be devastating for Israelis. However, it is the potential for violence that motivates many Christian Zionists involved with the various Temple restoration projects to continue voicing their support of Religious Zionists desecrating one of Islam's holiest sites. Hal Lindsey's writing provides a clear demonstration of Christian Zionists' support for rebuilding, despite the potential violence it would certainly incite: "There is one major problem barring the construction of a third Temple. That obstacle is the second holiest place of the Muslim faith, the Dome of the Rock. This is believed to be built squarely in the middle of the old Temple site. Obstacle or no obstacle, it is certain that the Temple will be rebuilt. Prophecy demands it."⁶⁵ Although Lindsey appears to be misinformed concerning Islam, in that both Mecca and Medina are considered holier than the Dome of the Rock, his words reflect the potentially catastrophic goal of the Christian

And at the Temple Mount, even a spark can ignite disaster." Gorenberg, *The End of Days*, 178.

⁶⁴ The Dome of the Rock is believed by Muslims to be the location where Muhammad was taken directly to heaven during his 'night flight' to Jerusalem.

Zionist striving to restore the Temple. With the relationship between Jews and Muslims already quite volatile, encouraging interference with a Muslim holy place is tantamount to disaster for the citizens of Israel. Yet, for Christian Zionists, both the rebuilding of the Temple and a war between Arabs and Jews are considered necessities for the fulfillment of their own theology.

Various influential Christian Zionists have recognized the tension between Palestinians and Jewish fundamentalists. In accordance with their recognition of this conflict, these Christian Zionists have constructed rhetoric that encourages antagonism between the two groups. Because Premillennialist theology demands that the conflict between Israel and Palestine escalate, a substantial amount of inflammatory material has been produced by Christian Zionists to assist in such an escalation. Christian Zionists posit the Palestinians as being one of the largest obstacles prohibiting the fulfillment of prophecy and much polemic has been produced clearly demonstrating this idea. Speaking specifically of the Palestinians, Jerry Falwell accused them of wanting nothing less than the complete destruction of the Jews: “These Islamic fundamentalists, radical terrorists, Mideastern monsters are committed to destroying the Jewish nation, drive Israel into the sea, conquer the world. An Orthodox Jewish associate told me that now America knows what Israel has been facing for 53 years at the hands of Arafat and the other barbarians.”⁶⁵ Falwell’s hyperbolic rhetoric is made even more powerful when considering he made these statements the day following the attacks of September 11, 2001. In order to maximize his audience’s support for the Christian Zionist cause, he took

⁶⁵ Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 57.

⁶⁶ Eric Gormly, “Evangelical Solidarity With the Jews: A Veiled Agenda?,” in *Review of Religious*

terms being used in popular United States discourse such as Islamic fundamentalists and radical terrorists, and applied them directly to Arafat and the Palestinians.

Israel plays a prominent role in Dispensational Premillennialism. The belief that only when the entirety of Biblical Israel is inhabited and governed by Jews will Jesus return creates for Christian Zionists a vested interest in Israel. As the previous section has shown, Christian Zionists have participated in public activism that supports the expansion of modern Israel's borders. Additionally, Christian Zionists have sponsored programs intended to increase the Jewish population of Gush Emunim settlements along the West Bank. Christian Zionist ministers have used the media to encourage other Christians to support their cause while also encouraging Jewish fundamentalists to continue their expansionary efforts. Jewish fundamentalists find outside support from Christian Zionists that assists in funding and promoting the Jewish fundamentalist agenda. These Christian Zionists encourage the Jewish fundamentalist settlers to engage in expansionist activities that place the settlers in direct conflict with the Palestinians.

IV. Christian Zionists and Jewish Fundamentalists Working Together

Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists are two distinct groups that hold quite different religious views. Both groups do, however, share the common goal of restoring Israel to its biblical boundaries. This section will discuss the ways that Christian Zionists emphasize the kinship ties between themselves and Jews as a means of refuting the exclusionary rhetoric of Jewish fundamentalists. Christian Zionists attempt to convince the Jews that Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists share a common goal. Additionally, this section will examine how the vilification of Arabs can lead to disastrous consequences for all of Israel.

Jewish Fundamentalists construct an image of Palestinians that is quite similar to the Christian Zionists' ideology concerning the Palestinians. Leaders within the Religious Zionist movement call for a similarly inflexible approach when dealing with the position of Palestinians. Rabbi Meir Kahane speaks of Palestinians as a people with whom no compromise should be made. "Concessions? Compromise? Moderation? Foolish exercises in self-delusion and self-destruction as long as the Arab believes--as he does--that Israel is a bandit state and that the Jews have stolen 'Palestine'." ⁶⁷ Kahane argues that the Palestinians are not a legitimate people and that Israel should avoid all negotiations with this group. ⁶⁸ By arguing that compromise would be self-destructive, Kahane urges Israel to dismiss the idea and proceed forward in their attempts to expand Israel's borders. Both religious Zionists and Christian Zionists strive to posit the Palestinians as a group that does not recognize Israel's right to exist and therefore should

⁶⁷ Meir Kahane, *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1974), 28.

⁶⁸ "The time has come to declare a policy for Israel and its Jewish supporters that clearly, loudly, and pointedly proclaims that there never was, there is not now, and there never will be such a thing as a

be viewed as a threat to the state of Israel. By insisting that Palestinians should be viewed as nothing other than terrorists.⁶⁹ Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists hope to prevent any further attempts at a peaceful ending to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Many of the contributions made to Israel by Christian Zionists have been of assistance to the Jewish fundamentalists. Regardless of their motives for doing so, the monetary contributions, particularly to the various Gush Emunim settlements, have certainly provided beneficial material goods for their inhabitants.⁷⁰ However, it is the blatant disregard for the safety of those same settlers that negates any charitable actions undertaken by the Protestant groups. They encourage actions that will likely lead to further confrontations between those settlers and the nearby Arab population. Rather than strive to create a peaceful atmosphere in which the settlers can thrive, the Christian Zionists wish to incite conflict in order to further their own eschatological agenda, adding warfare to the Jewish occupation of Eretz Israel.

While the immediate goals of both Christian and religious Jewish Zionists appear the same, the anticipated end is much different. Jews do not anticipate the return of Jesus or the physical destruction of the earth, yet it is not this aspect of Premillennialist theology that threatens to put the safety of Israel as a whole in jeopardy. Instead, it is the Premillennialists' specific expectation of warfare between Israel and the surrounding countries that could result in devastating consequences for not just Religious Zionists, but

"Palestine" people or state." Kahane, *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land*, 21.

⁶⁹ Describing a policy he terms "Hebronism", Kahane writes, "It is the Arab policy of extermination of the Jew who seeks to live on his own land." Kahane, *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land*, 31.

⁷⁰ For example, scholar Donald Wagner reports that Christian Zionist pastor John Hagee's San Antonio church raised \$1 million in donations to be used for the purpose of relocating Russian Jews to West Bank settlements. Donald E. Wagner, "Marching to Zion," in *Christian Century*, June 28, 2003.

for all Israeli citizens. Because violence between Israel and its neighbors is integral to fulfilling the eschatological goals of Christian Premillennialists, Christian Zionists' support for establishing a greater state of Israel shows a lack of concern for Israelis. Premillennialist Christians expect violence between Jews and Arabs that will eventually result in the death of the Jews. This belief inspires the Christian Zionists to promote dangerous activities among the Jewish fundamentalist settlements. Therefore, the assistance offered by Christian Zionists is not worth the potential consequences of the Christian Zionists' theology.

The alliance forged between the two very different religious groups is made all the more noteworthy when one considers the evidence of the integral distrust that each side displays for the other. The following portion of this essay will examine the rhetoric of both Religious Zionists and Christian Zionists, with attention paid in particular to the ways in which each group constructs images concerning the other. Texts written by insiders from each movement reveal a complete lack of consideration for the welfare of Israeli Jews on the part of Zionist Christians and likewise, an ideological insistence on the rejection of all outsider assistance on the part of Jewish fundamentalists.

Many examples of Religious Zionist rhetoric concerning Gentiles can be found in the writings of Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubovitcher Rebbe. Although Schneerson wrote on a variety of religious topics and much of his philosophy is given great value by mainline Jews, a portion of his writings features an exclusivist angle concerning the differences between Jews and Gentiles. A Hasidic rebbe, Schneerson held a great amount of political influence in Israel's Knesset.⁷¹ Although he was not a

⁷¹ The Knesset is Israel's governing body.

politician himself, the prominence of his work has influenced the thinking of various Israeli politicians. Jewish fundamentalists have cited portions of his writing as an argument in favor of creating a divide between Jews and Gentiles, promoting the preservation of a Jewish state and rejecting the participation of non-Jews in said state. Much of Schneerson's discourse was based around his own exegeses of both Torah and Talmudic writings. Speaking of the differences between Jews and Gentiles, he wrote:

“The Jewish body was chosen [by God], because a choice is thus made between outwardly similar things. The Jewish body looks as if it were in substance similar to bodies of non-Jews, but the meaning ... is that the bodies only seem to be similar in material substance, outward look and superficial quality. The difference of the inner quality, however, is so great that the bodies should be considered as completely different species.”⁷²

Rabbi Schneerson indeed was a staunch supporter of Religious Zionism. A focal point of his activism, as is evidenced by the preceding quotation, argued that the Jews were a people favored by God. In line with this opinion, his rhetoric posits the Gentiles as being vastly different from the Jews. Schneerson's image of the Jews constructs them as a people who should not accept the assistance of outsiders.

The exclusivist tone of the Rabbi Schneerson passage is striking, but there are other Jewish Fundamentalists who echo his sentiments. A great deal of literature composed by Religious Zionists, intended for a like-minded audience, stresses the need for separation between Jewish followers of the Zionist cause and outsiders. Rabbi Ovadia Yoseph, a prominent Sephardic Israeli rabbi, has taken a primarily dovish stance in matters of Israeli-Palestinian relations. However, much less publicized is his rhetoric concerning his views about the Christian presence in Israel. Rabbi Yoseph's pacifistic

⁷² Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Gatherings of Conversations*, quoted in Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 59.

leanings are motivated by his impression of Israel as being militarily incapable of waging offensive warfare against gentile populations in Israel. One such example of this can be seen in Yoseph's argument that he would support the destruction of "idolatrous" Christian churches in Israel, but only if such a task could be accomplished without loss of Jewish lives.⁷³ Language such as this serves to exemplify both the solidarity stressed by leaders within the Religious Zionist movement, as well as the immeasurable value Jewish fundamentalists place on Jewish life within.

Perhaps the best example of the Religious Zionist philosophy constructing a Jewish in-group to the exclusion of all non-Jews in Israel can be found in the rhetoric of religious Zionist Rabbi Meir Kahane. Ira Sharkansky speaks of a portion of Rabbi Kahane's views as being ethnocentric. An examination of Kahane's own writings prove this assessment true. "He often quoted passages from Ezra and Nehemiah in order to justify proposals to forbid sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews, to deprive non-Jews of all civil rights, and to expel them from Israel. Kahane's opponents compared his demands to the Nuremburg Laws that the Nazis legislated against the Jews."⁷⁴ The impression that Kahane's rhetoric was less nationalistic than it was outright racist was not lost on his intended audience. After Alan Goodman opened fire on a group of Muslims at the Temple Mount in 1982, it was revealed that he was a follower of Rabbi Kahane. Kahane's provocative language and seemingly outright support of violence led even the most conservative factions of Gush Emunim to distance themselves from the Rabbi.⁷⁵

⁷³ Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, 154ff.

⁷⁴ Sharkansky, *Rituals of Conflict*, 84.

⁷⁵ "On April 11, 1982 Allen Harry Goodman, an Israeli soldier, went on a shooting rampage on the Temple Mount. Storming into the Al Aksa Mosque with an M-16 rifle Goodman killed a Muslim guard and wounded other Arabs. This incident set off a week of rioting and strikes in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. At his trial Goodman told the court that he had expected to become "King of the Jews by

Kahane's ethnocentrism, it should be noted, was soundly dismissed by mainline Israeli society. While, as previously stated, parties with an agenda perceived as racist were barred from seeking Knesset seats, Kahane himself was specifically barred from running in 1988. The rejection of Jewish violence against Arabs for both religious and ethnic reasons by both the larger Israeli political body as well as the majority of Jewish fundamentalists themselves, proves that both the country and leaders within the religious Zionist expansion movements were beginning to move away from more violent forms of activism that originated with Tzvi Kook's Zionist ideology. However, with the increased involvement of Christian Zionists in Israel, the push for more aggressive tactics on the part of religious Zionists is again increasing.

If Christian Zionist theologians are familiar with the exclusionary aspects of Religious Zionism, they are certainly undaunted by it. However, the approach taken by Christian Zionists is unique in its claims. Norma Moruzzi's study of Christian Zionism led her to conclude "Christian Zionists have adapted themselves to the modern Zionist movement by reversing the usual priorities of modern nationalist discourse. Rather than focusing on issues of ethnic self-determination, they have emphasized the religio-mythic aspect of Jewish nationalism: the achievement of a Jewish national homeland as the contemporary fulfillment of ancient scriptural prophecy."⁷⁶ Rather than constructing an argument in support of Israel based upon the concept of Jewish ethnicity, Christian Zionist discourse focuses on the religious scriptures shared with the Jews, which posit Israel as the divinely ordained Jewish homeland. Using this tactic serves to mobilize

liberating this holy spot." He was convicted a year later and sentenced to life plus two terms of twenty years." Templemount.org, "Moving Towards a Third Temple," <http://www.templemount.org/tempprep.html> (accessed April 2007).

Christian support by reinforcing the theological implications of Palestine in its entirety being under Jewish control. Additionally, the decision to frame the Jews as a religious group, rather than an ethnicity, eliminates from Jewish-Christian discourse the sharp differences between Jews and Gentiles that were constructed by many prominent Jewish fundamentalists. There was no need to challenge the rhetoric that posited Jews and Gentiles as being intrinsically different, if all conversation was framed in religious goals.

Much of the rhetoric of Christian Zionists attempts to emphasize the kinship between Christianity and Judaism. The means by which many Christian Zionists make their strongest connections between Christians and Jews can be found in their rhetoric concerning Jesus himself. "While some Christians try to deny the connection between Jesus of Nazareth and the Jews of the world, Jesus never denied his Jewishness. He was born Jewish, He was circumcised on the eighth day in keeping with Jewish tradition, He had his Bar Mitzvah on his 13th birthday, He kept the law of Moses, He wore the Prayer Shawl Moses commanded all Jewish men to wear, He died on a cross with an inscription over His head, "King of the Jews!"⁷⁷ On Christian Zionist minister John Hagee's official website, a large section is devoted to appeals for Christian support of the expansion of Israel's borders. In Hagee's argument for why his Christian audience should be concerned with the affairs of Israel, he places a strong emphasis on Jesus being himself a Jew. Such rhetoric serves to strengthen the image of kinship shared between Christians and Jews. Additionally, this language also serves in keeping discourse between the two groups focused on the idea that Christian Zionists wish to support Israel based upon this kinship rather than the desire to fulfill a distinctly Christian prophecy. This is indeed

⁷⁶ Norma Claire Moruzzi, "Strange Bedfellows," in *Modern Judaism*, 26.1 (2006): 55-73.

important when one considers that a large part of this prophecy suggests an inevitable catastrophic war between Israel and its neighboring Arab countries.

In addition to John Hagee's Christian Zionist ministry, many similar organizations produce rhetoric that draws clear connections between Christianity and Judaism. The availability of the internet and other forms of media allow these Christian Zionist groups to broadcast their calls for Christian support of Israel to far greater audiences than were available to early advocates for Christian Zionism. One such example of using the media as a means for promoting the Christian Zionist agenda can be found in Pat Robertson's Christian television program "The 700 Club." The show is presented as hard news, but features admittedly Christian editorial commentary. Special attention is given to any military happenings in Israel and Robertson often interviews prominent Israeli politicians, including former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on-air. On September 18, 2001, "The 700 Club" featured a special episode in which Robertson and the other Christian members of the cast participated in a Rosh Hashanah celebration.

"Today is Rosh Hashanah," Robertson began. "We identify with our dear friends in the Jewish community and Israel..." (September 18, General Feature). And in the videotaped celebration, with the sounds of Shofars punctuating his comments, Robertson intoned, "We're here for this great occasion, the Feast of the Tabernacles, to praise God for what He's doing."⁷⁸

It should be noted that Robertson appears to be mistaken in respect to Jewish holidays. He speaks of both Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot as being the same holiday, when they are in fact quite different. Even so for a Christian Zionist leader as prominent as Robertson to

⁷⁷ "Supporting Israel," John Hagee Ministries, <http://www.jhm.org/support-israel.asp> (accessed May 2007).

⁷⁸ Gormly, "Evangelical Solidarity With the Jews: A Veiled Agenda?" in *Review of Religious Research* Volume 46:3 (2005): 261.

be shown participating in a Jewish festival, the intent is clear. Robertson's actions are meant to show a common link between Christians and Jews and in doing so both encourage Christians to support Israel and convince Jews that the support of Christian Zionists comes from an acceptance of Jewish religion. Attempts by Christian Zionists to reinforce the notion that they accept the religion of the Jews is essential in that it helps to assuage reservations on the part of non-fundamentalist Zionist Israelis concerning the negative consequences of Christian Zionist support.

Continuing with the example of Christian Zionist rhetoric provided by "The 700 Club," another technique utilized is the commentary on United States policy concerning Israel. Robertson uses his television program as a means for reinforcing his ideology that anyone opposed to the expansion of Israel should be seen as an enemy of the United States as well. "Robertson again maintained this was a spiritual struggle with people whose vision of God is warped and twisted but includes the destruction of the infidels and those who stand in their way. America is the biggest obstacle to their goal of taking over the Middle East."⁷⁹ Note that Robertson includes the idea that Islam constructs a faulty image of the divine along with his assertion that only the United States has the ability to prevent Arab Muslims from overtaking Israel. In doing this, he reasons that the United States and Israel have a correct image of God and therefore should see each other as allies. In appealing to his audience's religious ideology, Robertson attempts to strengthen feelings of camaraderie between Israel and his Christian Zionist audience.

The Hebrew scriptures are considered authoritative in both Jewish fundamentalist groups and Christian Zionist groups. Similar to Christian Zionists citing biblical passages

⁷⁹ Gormly, "Evangelical Solidarity With the Jews: A Veiled Agenda?" in *Review of Religious Research*,

when constructing pro-Israeli arguments, Jewish fundamentalists also emphasize biblical scripture when asserting their claim to Eretz Israel. “Unto the L-rd is the earth and all that is in it. The creator of the universe who gives and takes away, gave unto his people the Land of Israel as theirs, alone and without reservation.”⁸⁰ Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists both attempt to legitimize the Jews’ claim to Eretz Israel by using scriptural sources. Rather than making a secular, political argument concerning Israel’s right to exist, Christian Zionists and religious Zionists argue that secular authority is irrelevant because the Jews have a divine right to inhabit all of biblical Israel.

The belief that Jews have a divine right to control all of biblical Israel is coupled with the image of Arab Muslims being intrinsically both anti-Jewish and anti-Christian. This lends itself to Christian Zionist and Jewish fundamentalist protests against any steps to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Similarly, the image of the anti-Jewish, anti-Christian Muslim prohibits attempts to promote the Temple Mount as a shared sacred space. Religious scholar Stephen Sizer argues, “The biblical literalism of Christian Zionism leads many to demonize Arabs and Palestinians as Satanic enemies of the Jewish people; their futurist reading of prophecy demands that much of the Middle East belongs to the Jewish people; and their eschatology predicts a pessimistic and apocalyptic end to the world.”⁸¹ Christian Zionists’ adherence to Premillennialism lends itself to the belief that a war between Arabs and Jews is necessary for the return of Jesus. This ideology leads to Christian Zionists pleading with Israel to reject any attempts at a

263.

⁸⁰ Kahane, *Our Challenge: The Chosen Land*, 23.

⁸¹ Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, 230.

peaceful reconciliation with the Palestinians. Israel cannot surrender any of its land nor can it maintain peace between itself and the Arab population. Either of these occurrences would halt the anticipated battle of Armageddon. Christian Zionists believe that the Jews are commanded by God to govern all of biblical Israel and anything short of that would be in defiance of God's plan.

The most important result of the argument focusing on the divine right of the Jews to control all of Eretz Israel is the way that it shapes the discourse between Jewish Fundamentalists and Christian Zionists concerning Muslims. With rhetoric constructing Eretz Israel as being the divinely ordained Jewish homeland as well as positing Muslims as terrorists with an incorrect view of God, Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists attempt to eliminate any hope for a peaceful compromise between Israel and the countries with a Muslim majority that surround it. Christian Zionist minister Jan Willem Van der Hoeven's sermons, delivered in Jerusalem, provide an excellent example of the Christian Zionists' encouragement of Jewish fundamentalists to reject any form of compromise with the Muslim population. During one such sermon delivered below Jerusalem's Old City walls and attended by Benjamin Netanyahu, Van der Hoeven stated, "My messiah is not going to come to a Mosque of Omar, but a Third Temple which God will let be built, I hope under your [Netanyahu] premiership."⁸² The inflammatory tone of Van der Hoeven is self-evident. In his speech, he references both an image of Jesus and the possibility of a Third Temple as a means of making his ideology appealing to both Christian Zionists and Jewish fundamentalists. Additionally, Van der Hoeven argues that both the construction of a new Jewish Temple and Jesus' return are impossible as long as

⁸² Gorenberg, *The End of Days*, 162.

the Mosque of Omar stands on the Temple Mount. Van der Hoeven is appealing to his audience to take steps that will ensure the destruction of a sacred Muslim site.

The destruction of the Dome of the Rock site is obviously an integral part of Van der Hoven's theology, however he speaks just as strongly concerning giving any land inside of the Biblical Israel boundaries to non-Jews. Van der Hoeven is similar to many Christian Zionists in his absolute rejection of any compromise with Palestinian Arabs that results in the Palestinians gaining land. "Had there not been an Israeli Defense Force to defend the remnant of European Jewry that immigrated to Israel, the Arabs would have gladly fulfilled Hitler's dream a long time ago by finishing off those of the Jews that the Nazi megalomaniac had left alive."⁸³ Van der Hoeven suggests that, if given the opportunity, Arabs would resort to genocide against the Jews. Such strong rhetoric is meant to discourage any attempts toward a peaceful reconciliation in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Certainly the primary motivation for the antagonistic rhetoric directed toward the Arabs is the Christian Zionists' opposition to the Palestinians gaining land that the Christian Zionists insist can only rightfully belong to Israel. However, equally as noteworthy is the aspect of Christian Zionist eschatology that requires war between Jews and Arabs as a precursor to Jesus' return. It can be inferred from Christian Zionist rhetoric that the two ways in which the conflict between Arabs and Jews can be escalated is through encouragement to marginalize Palestinians and through provoking the destruction of sites sacred to Muslims.

Jan Willem Van der Hoven is but one example among many of Christian Zionist

⁸³ Van der Hoeven, Jan Willem, *Hitler and the Arabs*, the Freeman Centre,

speakers who openly promote the destruction of Muslim sacred sites in Israel.

Gorenberg cites Christian Zionist ministers John W. Schmitt and J. Carl Laney's vision of Israel's future, "Someday newspaper headlines around the world will announce the destruction of the Dome of the Rock. That event will prepare the way for the rebuilding of the Temple in fulfillment of biblical prophecy."⁸⁴ Such a statement reveals that Christian Zionists anticipate the destruction of the Dome of the Rock (Mosque of Omar) for the purpose of rebuilding the Temple. A violent reaction from the world's Muslim population is the only likely outcome of any attempts to destroy the Dome of the Rock. Christian Zionists and Jewish fundamentalists alike realize the sanctity of the Dome of the Rock to Muslims. However, by emphasizing the desire of both Christian Zionists and Jewish fundamentalists to rebuild the Temple and positing Islam as a false religion, statements encouraging the destruction of the Dome of the Rock are legitimized utilizing a religious framework.

Many Christian Zionists take advantage of having constructed Islam as the enemy of Jews and Christians alike. Using broad stereotypes of Muslims, Christian Zionists describe Muslims as being intrinsically volatile as a means of fostering fear in both Christian and Jewish audiences. Christian Zionist author Donald Bridge uses the image of the volatile Muslim when speaking to his audience about the current state of the Temple Mount. "Arab feeling soon runs high here, and is expressed in anti-Christian and anti-Jewish frenzy. Mullahs shouting over the minarets' loudspeakers can turn a congregation into a rampaging mob within seconds."⁸⁵ To many Christian Zionists such as Bridge, the

http://freeman.org/m_online/apr01/hoevn.htm (accessed June 2007).

⁸⁴ Gorenberg, *The End of Days*, 177.

⁸⁵ Donald Bridge, *Traveling Through the Promised Land* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1998),

terms Arab and Muslim are—incorrectly--interchangeable. To be one is to be the other.

Although there are many Christian Arabs in the Middle East and an even greater number of non-Arab Muslims, it is not helpful to the Christian Zionist agenda to construct the image of Arabs as anything other than Muslim. In this line of thought, Arabs both Muslim and non-Muslim, should always be considered a danger to Israel's safety. In suggesting that a congregation can become an uncontrollable mob within seconds, Bridge implies that the Arabs are an irrational people and therefore any attempt to negotiate with them would be without value. Christian Zionist rhetoric attempts to reinforce these images to the point of preventing the success of any movements toward resolving conflict between Jews and Palestinians.

V. Conclusion

Israel is the focal point of rhetoric produced by both Jewish fundamentalists and Christian Zionists. Both groups argue in favor of an Israel with the same borders that were described in the Hebrew scriptures. Additionally, both groups believe that the Jews alone have been sanctioned by God to govern all of Eretz Israel. This paper has demonstrated the roots of Jewish fundamentalism, beginning with Tzvi Kook's argument that Zionism should be religious in nature and that religious Zionists were the messiah that Israel has anticipated. Jewish fundamentalists have framed each new development in the history of modern Israel as signs of either the approval or disapproval of God. Through political activism and religious education, Jewish fundamentalists have continued in their attempt to construct an Israel governed entirely by religious law. By constructing settlements along the outer borders of Israel, they have attempted to expand Israel to its biblical borders. Although Jewish fundamentalists have occasionally condoned violence, we have seen that there is a limit to what the majority of the fundamentalists believe is acceptable. Incidents such as the Baruch Goldstein massacre and the Rabin assassination have left many Jewish fundamentalists still firm in their beliefs, but rejecting the use of such violent means.

While many Jewish fundamentalists attempt to curtail violence, Christian Zionists believe that violence is the only way in which their goal can be met. Using the Premillennial Dispensationalist theology, Christian Zionists posit that Jesus can only return to an Israel ravaged by war. Christian Zionists have contributed time and money in order to help sustain Jewish fundamentalist settlements in the West Bank. Christian Zionist-sponsored programs have been created in order to fund Aliyah for the Jews of

Eastern Europe meant to populate the settlements. Prominent Christian Zionist ministers have traveled to Israel in order to meet both Jewish fundamentalists and Israeli politicians in attempts to encourage the continued settling of the West Bank. Many of the same ministers have used television and other forms of media in order to maximize support for their mission among American Christian Zionists. The underlying reason for all the activism on the part of Christian Zionists is their anticipation of the Battle of Armageddon signaling the return of Jesus.

On the surface, much of the action taken by Christian Zionists seems benign. However, it is their expectation of a catastrophic war that presents a danger for Israel. The absolute belief that there must be a world-ending war between Israel and the Arabs motivates Christian Zionists to take an antagonistic role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Christian Zionists produce rhetoric that demonizes Arabs as well as Islam. A great deal of pressure is placed upon Jewish fundamentalists to begin construction of the Third Temple, even if that means destroying the Mosque on Omar which is now located on the Temple Mount. Jewish fundamentalists are urged by Christian Zionists to stand firm against any policy that could lead to a peaceful resolution of conflict with Palestinians. Each of these aspects of the Christian Zionists' involvement in Israel is meant to expedite the war they believe is inevitable. Many Israeli politicians and Jewish fundamentalists have recognized the benefit of accepting the support of Christian Zionists without, however, acknowledging the inherent danger to the survival of Israel and Judaism.

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